



Ukraine Information for Coloradans

How is the State of Colorado responding to the Russian invasion in Ukraine?

Governor Polis took swift action to condemn Russian aggression and to stand with Ukraine and her people.

State actions include:

- Thursday February 24: Governor Jared Polis signed an [Executive Order](#) on new state actions in response to Russia's invasion of Ukraine
- Friday, February 25: Governor Polis informed the federal government that Colorado is ready to welcome refugees and is prepared to provide support to Ukrainians. Read the Governor's [letter](#) to Secretary Blinken.
- Friday, February 25: In a [letter](#) to the Ukrainian Embassy and Consulate, Governor Polis pledged to welcome refugees to Colorado, writing "Colorado stands at the ready to embrace Ukrainian refugees should this conflict continue."
- Friday, February 25: In a [letter](#) to the Russian Embassy and Consulate, Governor Polis severed diplomatic ties with Russia.
- Friday, February 25: Governor Polis [thanked](#) State Treasurer Dave Young for his quick actions to review the state's investment portfolio and confirm that the Colorado Treasury Department does not hold assets tied to the Russian government.
- Friday, February 25: In a letter to Colorado PERA, Governor Polis [applauded](#) Colorado PERA's quick action to divest \$7.2M from a Russian bank and urge the complete divestiture of the PERA Trust Fund from any and all Russian state-owned institutions.
- Friday, February 25: The Governor, staff members from offices of Colorado's federal delegation, and the Office of New Americans met with Ukrainian Coloradans and other community leaders, such as in the faith and nonprofit sector.
- Saturday, February 26: In Solidarity with Ukraine, Governor Polis announced that the Capitol would be illuminated with blue and yellow lights.

How can I bring family or friends in Ukraine or a neighboring country to Colorado as fast as possible?

The federal government oversees immigration policies, not the state. As such, federal agencies, like [USCIS](#) and the [Department of State](#), oversee the U.S. immigration system. Please review their websites in close consultation with an immigration attorney for the best path forward.



Immigration is complex. Because each individual situation is different, we suggest that you reach out to an expert in immigration law. You can find low cost immigration legal services by connecting with a Department of Justice accredited agency. Find the list of agencies in Colorado [here](#). You can also search for an immigration lawyer affiliated with the American Immigration Lawyers Association [here](#). If you are connecting with an immigration representative, please educate yourself on how to spot immigration fraud (also called Notario Fraud), which unfortunately can occur in times such as this. Learn more [here](#).

Members of Colorado's federal delegation can assist in certain cases. Find your Congressperson [here](#).

You may also contact the offices of Senators Bennet and Hickenlooper; both have offices throughout the state. Find contacts for Bennet's office [here](#) and Hickenlooper's [here](#).

- For Senator Hickenlooper, you may email Casework@Hickenlooper.Senate.gov.
- For Senator Bennet, please contact eva_serenil@bennet.senate.gov

US citizens and legal permanent residents should also complete the Department of State's crisis intake form, found [here](#).

How can I connect my family or friends to services available to those fleeing Ukraine in eastern Europe?

Registration with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the first step in refugee resettlement and a key way to ensure your loved one's short and longer-term protection. Find more [here](#). Social media can also be a powerful tool in situations such as these.

I have a loved one in Ukraine or I have been in war before.

The last few days have been challenging for many Coloradans, and we want to remind you that taking care of yourself is important too. It can help to talk about your feelings. You can reach someone who will listen and help you work through your feelings, for free, at 1-844-493-8255. Interpretation is available.

How soon might Colorado receive Ukrainian refugees as a result of the war?

More than likely, not very soon. Over the past decade, Colorado has resettled 270 Ukrainian refugees, 78 of those in the past two years. Many of these refugees fled the ongoing conflict in eastern Ukraine that ignited in 2014.



Refugees are individuals who are outside their home country and who cannot return due to war, violence and persecution. There are currently over 20 million refugees worldwide. Learn more about them [here](#).

The refugee resettlement process can be long and arduous, and many individuals wait for years. For instance, it took 24 months for Syrian refugees to arrive in Colorado after the beginning of the Syrian civil war.

At the beginning of a conflict, it is common to see individuals fleeing to neighboring countries, such as Ukrainians to Poland. The countries become host countries, temporarily providing safety. UNHCR, as the lead international agency, will assess the situation in the coming days, weeks and months, with an eye towards finding durable solutions for Ukrainians. The first solution they will explore is whether there may be a future in which Ukrainians can return home safely. The second will be whether countries, such as Poland or Hungary, may be able to offer sanctuary and opportunity. The last durable solution UNHCR will explore is refugee resettlement in a third country, such as the US or Canada. Less than one percent of refugees globally end up accessing third country resettlement.

Will Colorado see Ukrainian asylum seekers?

Yes. Asylum seekers are those individuals who make their own way to the U.S. border, and, as is their right, claim asylum to Custom and Border Patrol personnel. See more from the Bipartisan Policy Center [here](#). Asylum seekers will more than likely be joining family here in the state.

Asylum seekers, should they pass a credible fear interview, should be able to stay in the US while their asylum case proceeds in federal court. Asylum seekers must apply for asylum within one year of arrival and are encouraged to work with a qualified immigration attorney.

Can I provide housing to Ukrainians fleeing Russian aggression?

It is unlikely that we will see these individuals soon in Colorado, and those that we may see, such as asylum seekers, will likely join family. As the situation develops, you may check back in with the Colorado Refugee Services Program (crsp@state.co.us) at a later date, noting that most refugees will reside in metro Denver, due to the current location of Ukrainian communities. If you do reach out, please include information such as the rental unit's location, proximity to public transportation and number of bedrooms.

How can Coloradans support Ukraine and Ukrainians?

This is a dynamic and fluid situation. We encourage Coloradans to support organizations on the ground in Ukraine and the surrounding countries, and to support organizations, where

possible, that are led by Ukrainians themselves. As you consider how you want to support, we encourage you to verify the organizations that may be raising funds.

Governor Polis directed the Office of New Americans to prepare for Ukrainian refugees and serve Ukrainian Coloradans. What does this mean?

The [Office of New Americans](#) supports Coloradans by connecting immigrants to resources and opportunities and works closely with the [Colorado Refugee Services Program](#), which oversees the resettlement infrastructure in the state. These entities are already working to ensure other newcomers, like Afghans, have what they need to be successful. This foundation will ensure that Colorado is ready to welcome all Ukrainians, no matter their immigration status, to the mutual benefit of all Coloradans. By starting work to ensure their housing and economic security, for example, Colorado will be better equipped to embrace Ukrainians as they arrive.